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## **CLAIM AMENDMENTS:**

- (Currently amended) A method, comprising:
   requesting a password from a basic input-output system (BIOS) during a
   <u>boot sequence of a device</u>, after loading an operating system
   kernel;
  - receiving the password; and unlocking a hard drive with the password.
- (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:
   executing an initialization component in the operating system kernel; and
   loading a plurality of drivers.
- (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:
   determining whether the hard drive is locked;
   wherein requesting the password from the basic input-output system
   (BIOS) is performed after determining the hard drive is locked.
- 4. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the operating system kernel is loaded from a flash memory.
- (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:
   freezing a lock mechanism to prevent tampering with security parameters.
- 6. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim 2 +, wherein the plurality of drivers include integrated device electronics (IDE) drivers.
- (Currently amended) A system, comprising:
  - a processor;
  - a hard drive coupled to the processor;
  - an operating system to execute on the processor;
  - a basic input-output system (BIOS) to execute on the processor;

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- a password stored in the basic input-output system (BIOS) to unlock the hard drive; and
- a driver to execute from the operating system on the processor and to call the basic input-output system (BIOS) to retrieve the password during a boot sequence of the system, after a kernel of the operating system is loaded.
- 8. (Original) The system as recited in claim 7, further comprising:
  a chassis intrusion mechanism to alternate between a secure mode and a
  maintenance mode;
  - wherein the hard drive remains password protected in both the secure mode and the maintenance mode.
- 9. (Original) The system as recited in claim 7, wherein the password is a serial number.
- 10. (Original) The system as recited in claim 7, wherein the password is encrypted.
- 11. (Currently amended) A machine-accessible medium having associated content capable of directing the machine to perform a method during a boot sequence of the machine, the method comprising:
  - receiving, by a basic input-output system (BIOS), a hard drive password request from an operating system after a kernel of the operating system is loaded during the boot sequence;
  - determining, by the basic input-output system (BIOS), if a system is in a maintenance mode;
    - retrieving, by the basic input-output system (BIOS), a password, when the system is not in a maintenance mode;
    - encrypting, by the basic input-output system (BIOS), the password; and

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passing, by the basic input-output system (BIOS), the encrypted password to the operating system.

12. (Original) The machine-accessible medium as recited in claim 11, further comprising:

requesting, by an integrated device electronics (IDE) driver, the password; receiving, by the integrated device electronics (IDE) driver, the encrypted password;

wherein the integrated device electronics (IDE) driver is part of the operating system.

- 13. (Original) The machine-accessible medium as recited in claim 11, wherein the password is a system serial number.
- (Currently amended) A method, comprising:

determining, by an operating system, that a hard drive is locked, the operating system having a kernel loaded during a boot sequence;

receiving, by the operating system, a password from a basic input-output system (BIOS), the password received after the kernel of the operating system is loaded; and

unlocking, by the operating system, the hard drive using the password.

- 15. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, further comprising:
  determining, by the operating system, if the password is valid;
  wherein unlocking, by the operating system, the hard drive is performed
  only if the password is valid.
- (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, further comprising:

  freezing, by the operating system, a lock mechanism for the hard drive.
- 17. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:

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executing a basic input-output system (BIOS);
loading an operating system kernel;
executing the operating system kernel;
loading at least one integrated device electronics (IDE) driver;
querying a hard drive to determine if the hard drive is locked;
if the hard drive is locked, querying the basic input-output system (BIOS)
for a password after the operating system kernel is loaded and
executed;

returning the password from the basic input-output system (BIOS) to the at least one integrated device electronics (IDE) driver; and unlocking the hard drive.

- 18. (Original) The method as recited in claim 17, further comprising:
  accessing the basic input-output system (BIOS) from the operating system
  kernel through a system interrupt.
- 19. (Original) The method as recited in claim 18, further comprising: initializing the hard drive, after unlocking the hard drive.
- 20. (Original) The method as recited in claim 18, wherein <u>loading an</u> <u>operating system kernel further comprises</u> the computer system loads the operating system kernel in <u>less than</u> <del>approximately three</del> seconds.